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# South Korea's Public Diplomacy: A cultural approach.

The acquirement of soft power.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Public Diplomacy has been around for decades, in some parts of the world more than others. Despite that, research related to public diplomacy has mainly focused on approaches serving governments' policy concerns. A large part of the research has also surrounded efficiency aspects: the level of impact culminating from public diplomacy activities. This tunnel vision has undoubtedly contributed to the limitation of theoretical and methodological development.

From that standpoint, this study attempts to contribute and fill the existing theoretical and methodological gap. The study builds on the research by Yun (2005), directed by J. E. Grunig, and examines the reliability of her framework and sheds light on some potential shortcomings and eventual amendments. Suggesting the convergence of public diplomacy and public relation, the model is composed of two theoretical frameworks. Public diplomacy as the dependent variable is anchored in Grunig's excellence theory and national culture as determinants (independent variable) is anchored in Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory.

As did Yun, the study finds that cultural dimensions as determinants for South Korea's public diplomacy do not possess sufficient explanatory power to understand South Korea's public diplomacy management. A historical lens and additional contextual factors would hypothetically better explain Korea's public diplomacy, paving the way for future studies.

### **Keywords:**

Public diplomacy, public relation, soft power, excellence theory, Grunig, cultural dimensions, Hofstede

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## 1. Introduction

Foreign policy today is no longer limited to governments; there is a mass effect at work, where multiple agents interact with each other in a complex process we know as International Relations. The quests for “hearts and minds” have become of great importance in order to support the objectives of nations around international negotiating tables. Joseph Nye coined the concept of *soft power*, which he considers a mean for success in international politics (2004). The term has been used frequently over many years, but what does it really mean? The notion of power is simply the ability to influence others to get what you want. Influence can be conducted in different ways; according to Joseph Nye there are three basic ways to do so, 1) with threats, 2) with bribes and 3) with attraction. Soft power is linked to the third way – by attraction, which aims at attracting a target so that the target wants what you want. Furthermore, he argues that power is very much context specific and distributed as on a three dimensional chessboard. On the first board there is military relations among states, on the second there is economic relations and on the last board there is overall cooperation among states to solve the so called transnational issues such as terrorism. Joseph Nye goes on and argues that no state, no matter how powerful in terms of military or economic power, can successfully solve international issues. Since individual states are not capable of solving international issues on their own, soft power is essential to attract and enable cooperation with other states. *Hard* power is not a substitute for soft power and vice versa, the combination of hard and soft power is defined as *smart* power. In other words, no states can successfully manoeuvre on the stormy sea of international politics without some degree of soft power.

As a report from the British Council (2013) stresses, western countries today face an increasing competition from more outward-looking emerging countries with respect to soft power. Looking at it through a Weberian lens, public diplomacy (PD) is about which country that can formulate a winning narrative – legitimate authority. The report goes on stressing that the most successful nations in terms of soft power will be those that invest in their PD, but more importantly – those who will show a dynamic and open attitude towards a changing world. Disclosing the critical limits of conventional hard power, the events of 9/11 was a turning-point - the time when nations exerted “hard power” in self-interest purpose now belongs to the past. With this new era, intangible assets are becoming sources of attraction and power. But they still need to be processed into tangible assets.

*Attraction* linked to soft power is obtained through different means of PD. Activities that fall under the umbrella of PD have therefore, according to Bruce Gregory, become the

main activities conducted by diplomatic actors; PD has become inseparable from diplomatic practise per se.

## 1.1 Background

The improvement in technology that characterised the last decades have together with the impact of 9/11 fundamentally changed the way decision-makers navigate the international system. Improved communication technology correlates with increasing interests of larger audiences, hence, indirectly interfering with international relations. Political leaders and decision-makers now face bigger constraints from publics when sitting at the negotiation table. Similarly, Mearsheimer (2011) stresses that foreign policy decisions are no longer obscured from audiences as they were before the age of technology. The support of foreign publics has become a key pillar in countries' effort to realize their foreign policy objectives. This is based on the logic that points of agreements must serve both domestic audiences and foreign counterparts. Putnam has likened the foreign policy process to playing two chess-board games at the same time, each at different tables – one at the domestic politics table and another one among international leaders. Playing both games at the same time and satisfy both corners are not easy when the foreign policy debates are on the news and updated continuously.

Intuitively: Along with globalization, the world has witnessed the spread of democracy, which in turn has put greater emphasis on PD. In democracies, citizens form together with an agenda-setting media, the public opinion and eventually affecting the foreign policy decision-making process of their governments (see e.g. Manheim 1994; Kunczik 2003)<sup>1</sup>.

Similarly, Fisher emphasises (1997) that we are facing an increasingly globalized world, where issues traditionally dealt with domestically now are a matter for the international community. Hence, increasing international elbow-bumping occasions. The question is then how do we cope with these elbow-bumping occasions? And what are the determinants affecting our handling of these occasions?

Fisher's central idea is that agents occupying a role in the international sphere are influenced by their national mind-sets. In the context of soft power and PD that reinforces the idea that governments and diplomats needs to understand how cultural factors affect their PD management. Thus, impacting on their foreign policy objectives. Consequently, he assumes

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<sup>1</sup> The study does not intend to elaborate on normative aspect of different PD approaches.

PD practitioners to engage in their daily work without proper psycho-cultural briefings. In order for nations to conduct efficient PD programs, it is important to understand how those involved in the practical work that at the end of the day constitute international relations are programmed to perceive and act in their tasks. Fisher refers to Webster's definition of mind-sets as "a fixed mental attitude formed by experiences, education, prejudice, etc.". National mind-sets as a cultural factor is therefore important to study in order to increase the soundness/effectiveness of PD.

Fisher's *mind-sets* are basically the same as Hofstede's *cultures* (1984) – the difference is that Hofstede formulated a persuasive theory on how to measure these cultures.

## 1.2 Study Objectives

The study attempts to answer *how* and *why* South Korea (from now on Korea) manage its PD as it does. The study follows the road paved by Bolewski (2008) and Yun (2005), and investigates to what degree national cultures can help government and diplomacy understand international interactions. The study therefore aims to investigate how foreign affairs are dealt with in practice. PD as a practise – consisting of vast arrays of activities - is difficulty packaged and fitted into any single discipline as institutionalized in academia<sup>2</sup>. In reality PD practitioners needs skills related to political science, communication, psychology, history, anthropology and social science. Most of the research surrounding the vast field of PD has focused on descriptive, historical and ideological, to the detriment of a theoretical conceptual framework. Without such framework, the research will fall short of describing what determinants that may affect PD behaviour and management. Yun (2005) attempted to fill that void when he initiated a theory building for comparative PD. My study will provide an evaluation of her theory as well as have a closer look upon Korea's PD.

Cultural awareness is the starting point for sound diplomacy since culture is a lens through which we observe and make judgement in the world. In the words of Bolewski (2008), every culture expresses an identity, hence demanding equal respect and tolerance. The lack of such respect and tolerance is a recipe for destructive diplomacy, but at the same time, lack of awareness hence studying the impact of culture on diplomacy can be equally bad.

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<sup>2</sup> Gilboa (2008) declares PD as one of the most multidisciplinary areas in modern scholarship. Figure 1 in the appendix A illustrates this.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

*How and why* does South Korea manage its public diplomacy activities the way it does?

### **1.4 Previous Studies**

The shift from government-to-government diplomacy to government-to-people or even people-to-people diplomacy brings about a blank map to be filled. Signitzer and Wamser (2006) emphasise that this shift sheds light on the similarities between public relations (PR) and PD. They emphasise how the mass participation in foreign policies and its mediatisation today extends far beyond the interactions between national governments. PD has in their view become a specific governmental public relations function. PD today, combines the skills of traditional diplomacy (formulates the idea to be communicated) with those of a social researcher (studies the targeted audience) and a mass communicator (formulates communication strategy). Despite similarities and convincing initiative such as Stignitzer's contribution there has been little development in this direction. This lack of convergence between PD and PR may be an answer to why theoretical aspects about independent variables of PD management have remained more or less non-existent.

Bolewski emphasises (2008) the importance of studying the link between national cultures and diplomacy in order to understand international relations. As a former ambassador he defines diplomacy as "dealing with culturally diverse groups by means of interactions and negotiations. The negotiation style of each participant is formed by one's own cultural "program"." (2008:146). Similarly to Fisher (1997), he stresses the increasing probability of misunderstandings in the ever more complex and globalized world (increasing cross-national interactions). Clearly influenced by Hofstede's cultural dimensions (which he regularly refers to), Bolewski elaborates on a possible development of Hofstede's cultural theory. Cultural differences among diplomats and their impact on diplomatic interactions is a linkage that hardly can be denied according to him. Since every diplomatic participant has her own "programming of the mind" that can't be abandoned, culture does inevitably impact on diplomacy. Bolewski is willing to go as far as arguing that culture – more than politics – provides structuring principles in the understanding of diplomatic practices and processes.

Existing studies centred on PD are according to Gilboa (2008) suffering from many weaknesses. They mainly deal with US experiences and are all too often taken out of the Cold War context. This large pool of historical research is in his view significant, but has been limited with respect to theoretical and methodological development. Moreover, Gilboa argues

that PD research systematically focused on the US, thus neglecting other countries. Non-traditional PD actors have in the same way been excluded from the general PD research, which have given way to traditional governmental PD actors being in the epicentre.

This study was conducted in the light of Gilboa's criticism. Influenced by Stignitzer and Coombs's (1992) ideas on PD, which includes other non-traditional PD actors and draws on their field of academia, namely PR research, I was able to identify a logic that better fits contemporary PD. Furthermore; Gilboa (2004) argues that modern PD research has not sufficiently attempted to apply Grunig's (1997) PR approach. Yun (2005) did however a comprehensive and convincing attempt to bridge the gap, but he did only cover traditional PD actors, namely embassies in the US.

## **2. Methodology**

This exploratory study employs a case study approach in which two complementary types of data sources are combined. In order to untangle the complexity of the Korean PD the need to collect different data is crucial. Inspired by the mixed-method approach, I gathered in-depth qualitative data through the Korean Cultural Attaché – Mr KIM Chung-Hwan - and enhanced the total amount of data through a comprehensive review and analysis of major Korean PD practitioners. This pragmatic and mixed-method influenced approach is a suitable research method to acquire detailed knowledge about a complex and wide topic such as PD. Reasons for this are for example, to get an overview of what falls into Korea's PD and what are its priorities and to investigate to what degree Korea embraces a Nation Branding versus a PD approach.

### **2.1 Research design**

Following Yun's (2005) approach, the study aims at explaining Korea's public diplomacy through the eyes of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions. Zurovchak (1997) too, successfully employed Hofstede's cultural dimensions when examining differences between Czech and Slovak foreign policy decision-making. Yun's (2005) and Grunig's (1997) models are, as Gilboa (2008) noted, much more promising for future empirical research; something this study has taken note of. Similarly to Yun, the investigation will address the Korean embassy as a traditional PD practitioner. Yun and Yang (2001) suggest that embassies are microcosms of governments - as an isolated island they preserve a strong national identity and



culture, which makes the ROK embassy an important study-object. Additionally, Cultural Attachés are perceived as the official public diplomacy practitioners. Consequently, a considerable part of the investigation focuses on the public diplomacy practises conducted by the Korean Cultural Attaché at the ROK embassy in Stockholm.

However, the empirical results do not entirely rely on that specific source of data. In order to include other less traditional PD actors, the study relies on two sets of data; 1) interview with the Korean Cultural Attaché and 2) content analysis of major Korean PD practitioners' webpages. This approach enables me to connect and anchor stronger/weaker links (correlation) between PD management and cultural dimensions. In other words, I will be able to reject or fail to reject my hypotheses with more certainty – scholars generally agree that mixed-methods yields the most reliable research results (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). More specifically, this type of mixed-method design is called the concurrent triangulation design (Creswell 2009). Essentially, such model enables me to confirm and cross-validate findings.

## **2.2 Research strategy**

In order to achieve the study-objective I have adopted a deductive strategy, where deduced hypothesis are subject to empirical scrutiny. Intuitively the strategy looks accordingly:

Theory → Hypothesis → Data Collection → Results → Hypothesis rejected or not rejected  
→ Theory Revision

## **2.3 Data collection and analysis**

In order to draw robust conclusions in terms of rejecting or not rejecting my hypotheses, I intend to triangulate my findings. Since the study aims at studying Korean PD, the qualitative part of the study focus partly on the official (and traditional) PD actor, namely the Korean Cultural Attaché. This decision is anchored in the definition of PD itself, as all governmental process of communicating with foreign audiences. Important to note is that the governmental process may include the empowerment of the public sector for example. The unit of analysis is thus the government, and in the logic of Yun and Yang (2001) the Cultural Attaché is *the* governmental actor that conducts the communication with foreign publics.

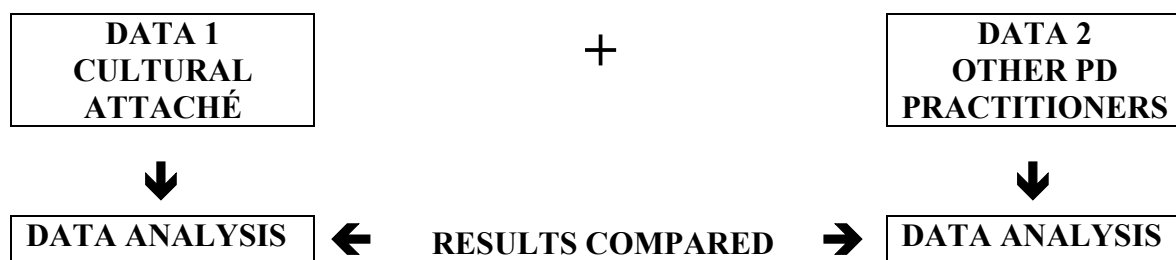
However, as will be discussed, Korean embassies are not the only governmental PD practitioners. Since there are numerous possible approaches to how PD may be carried out

(conceptualization), it is necessary to explore all major governmental activities linked to PD, and ultimately determine possible convergence, differences and/or combinations. Only then, will I be able to conclude upon the hypothesis leading up to the general question, how does Korea employ PD in order to acquire soft power. PD in Korea can be viewed in terms of the official core structure and those organizations that fall outside this structure but within the sphere of PD activities, such as nation branding, tourism and trade/investment promotion.

As briefly mentioned, the concurrent triangulation design enables researchers to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (or other combinations). The reasons underlying such strategy are to enable researches to compare the two types of data. Ultimately, it helps researches to identify and determine potential convergence, differences or combinations (Creswell 2009). This model carries the ability to offset eventual weakness inherent in one of the methods. Essentially, the strength inherent in one method may outweigh the weaknesses inherent in the other. The process is illustrated in figure 2.

**Figure 1**

### **Concurrent Triangulation Design**



SOURCE: Creswell 2009

### **2.3.1 Qualitative data 1**

A qualitative approach was adopted in order to deeper penetrate and better understand the realm of Korea's PD. The sample-size is, in all respects, small; it is comprised of one unit – the Korean Cultural Attaché at the ROK embassy in Sweden. Despite that, the sample should theoretically be representative of a large part of the government PD. Due to mainly time constraints, I conducted an e-interview (qualitative interview through email) with the Korean Cultural Attaché. Is there such an interview form? A new emerging methodological literature is suggesting the development of email interview (see e.g. Bryman 2008). The many advantages make it a popular alternative - especially its cost-effectiveness. E-interview also gives the interviewee time to construct and reflect upon an answer, thus

eliminating eventual nervousness (Bampton and Cowton 2002). On the other hand this type of interview method loses spontaneity and contextual signs such as body language. The interview was secured through email and telephone, where the interviewee suggested, with respect to time constraints, the appropriateness of an e-interview. The e-interview was designed as to encourage a meaningful answer capturing the subject's experiences. The email consisted of an introduction to the study and its objective, and a multiple set of open-ended questions (appendix B).

### **2.3.2 Qualitative data 2**

In an attempt to verify the data obtained through the ROK embassy and to validate the relationship between cultural dimensions and PD practices I collected additional qualitative data from other Korean PD practitioners. The large amount of data gives it quantitative dimension. The different PD practitioners were analysed using a content analysis approach. More specifically, I analysed and interpreted their official webpages in the light of the hypotheses; hence I adopted a direct content analysis. The analysis was conducted using themes as units of analysis, instead of physical linguistic units such as words usually applied in quantitative content analysis. According to Minichiello et al. (1990), themes as coding units are primarily used when searching for the expression of an idea, which is my intention.<sup>3</sup>

The analysis of all major Korean PD practitioners ultimately enabled me to provide a certain level in which cultural dimensions affect Korea's overall PD.

## **2.4 Methodological sum-up: Reliability and Validity**

This mixed-method influenced design is pragmatic in nature, it enables the researcher to use whatever tools he find suitable. However, all studies, whatever methodological framework they use, must be conducted in a reliable and valid way.

Influenced by Yun (2005) in his attempt to build a framework for comparative studies in PD, this study attempts to have a closer look at the cultural dimensions as determinants of the Korean PD. My study builds on his theoretical framework and further develops his conceptualization. Moreover, the generated hypotheses are linked to his theory and empirical

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<sup>3</sup> As some webpages' had restricted English versions, the content was translated with the help of Jinkyoun Gue, a Korean student at Södertörn University.

findings. In one way, the study will test his theory. Based on the hypotheses, I created a set of open-ended questions addressed to the ROK embassy in Stockholm.

Simultaneously, I investigated and analysed other major Korean PD practitioners by using a content analysis approach. The contents subject of analysis was official webpages, news statements, and speeches etc. that were available to the public. The error component is estimated to be small when analysing Korea's PD through this research design. The so-called random error when applying the measurements introduced hereunder will remain small and yield similar results.

These two steps were in a final phase merged in order to yield satisfactory knowledge to either reject or fail to reject the hypotheses. The validity of the study will be discussed along the entire body of text.

### **3. Theoretical discussion**

#### **3.1 What is Public Diplomacy?**

Prior to any further elaboration, we need to discuss and untangle the concept of PD. As noted by Gilboa (2008), PD has failed to reach a generally accepted conceptualization. However, too much focus on the weaknesses associated to a lack of such consensus is counterproductive.

Harold Nicholson (1988) explains how diplomacy has evolved – how diplomacy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has found interest in the publics. This modern form of diplomacy manifests itself when 1) there is a shift from secret to open diplomacy, 2) public opinions influence foreign policies, and 3) communication programs are extensively employed. Nicholson saw it as modern diplomacy – today it goes under the name of public diplomacy. PD officially coined in 1965 by E. Gullion, a retired foreign officer and dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University Centre of Public Diplomacy. In one of the school's earliest brochures the following definition is given:

"Public diplomacy ... deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of

foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications."

Much debate could have been avoided if scholars had accepted this early definition. There is despite that a component that PD scholars seem to be able to agree upon, namely communication activities. In that sense, PD is a strategic tool employed across governmental entities in order to guide and support campaigns to accomplish strategic objectives. PD activities are a set of actions that impact on global individuals' perception of a specific country. Borrowing the metaphor of Armstrong (2008), these PD activities can be seen as all a country's resources (employed in a communicative manner) such as cultural exhibitions, educational exchange programs and free trade agreements, which can be adjusted, just as volume and bass can be adjusted on a music device. Thus, with PD, nations try to fine-tune their music in order to attract as many admirers as possible.

Armstrong (2008) identifies three general categories of PD activities that seem to have gained a certain amount of general acceptance among scholars and PD practitioners:

1. *Information*: Management and dissemination of information with emphasis on short-term aspects;
2. *Influence*: Long-term oriented persuasion campaigns in order to change attitudes among foreign publics (attraction); and
3. *Engagement*: Build long-term relationships based on mutual understanding.

All three general categories are more or less communication-driven – there is an act of communication in all three categories - reinforcing the validity of the Excellence theory employed in this study. The most compelling PD conceptualization is Signitzer and Coombs' (1992) who also argue for the convergence of PR and PD due to their similar goals and tools. They define PD as "the way in which both governments and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions" (1992:138).

The public relation approach has gained ground during the last decade. Anholt among others has successfully penetrated the field of public diplomacy with his PR related approach – Nation Branding (NB).

### 3.1.1 Anholt's Nation-Branding

The concept of Nation Branding (Anholt 2007) encompasses the commodification of countries through strategic marketing aiming at building a positive image of countries, and ultimately attracting and changing attitudes of targeted audiences (foreign publics). Nation Branding is highly compatible with globalization where economics and marketing sets the agenda (Yun 2005:51). Nation Branding is in essence not new, countries have long been focused on increasing their reputation, hence promoting their influence in the international system. The only things that are new are the word “branding” and the PR techniques employed to increasing their reputations (Olin 2002). Through the PR-lens of Anholt, the world becomes a single global marketplace where countries need to compete among each other in order to attract tourists, foreign direct investments, media-attention and foreign public-attention (hence foreign governments’ attention). The theory's main contribution is – in the understanding of O’ Shaughnessy (2000) – the idea that countries’ “reputational capital”, similarly to that of corporations, yields comparative advantages on the global marketplace. Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index (NBI), widely used by countries and cities, is the sum of the perceptions of a country across six dimensions of country-assets: Export, governance, people, culture heritage, tourism and investment. Anholt’s theory is often misunderstood; he do not emphasize on the commercialization-type of branding. Nations are perceived as brands, but can only affect the way their countries are perceived through real changes (i.e. policy change). Raising a Nike-sized campaign budget will not create a Nike-sized country brand in a short-term horizon. Countries earn their brand through changing what caused the bad reputation in the first place – the communicational credibility is crucial (Anholt 2011).

PD and NB share many similarities and differences, but in essence NB is about increasing domestic economic activity through PR related communication and PD is about dealing with much more complex issues not easily understood abroad. As Gilboa simply puts it “public diplomacy cannot be reduced to slogans and images” (2008:68). Anholt on the other hand would argue that PD is part of NB. PD and NB are two formulas needed in order to acquire soft power. I include NB, based on the assumption that increased economic power increases soft power. But furthermore, the development of technology in a highly competitive information environment makes the competition for public-attention increasingly important. In this logic, Anholt argues that audiences in general have neither resources nor the desire to understand the complexity of foreign governmental policies. Their perceptions are generally

simplistic and encompass the country as a whole, meaning that foreign governmental policies will be perceived in the light of foreign publics' general attitudes toward countries. Therefore, Anholt emphasises the effectiveness of his all-encompassing theory (NB) over PD that only represents part of the tools enabling countries to acquire soft power.

### **3.1.2 Cultural Attaché**

The Cultural Attaché has the sole purpose of promoting cultural relations between his country and the country he temporarily resides in. The Cultural Attaché is in accordance with the logic of Nye (2004) an agent of persuasion and soft power.

Rivas (2007:33) suggests that the Cultural Attaché (similarly to Morgenthau) is officially responsible for representing and constructing his nation's identity abroad. Diplomatic representation is seen as representing interests; everything a cultural attaché does must be seen as an aspect of representation and as an attempt to serve the interests of her government (Sharp 1998). In this realist logic it is hard to see how diplomats would act otherwise than to represent their own interests. As a realist, Morgenthau surprisingly acknowledges the soft power inherent in public diplomacy. This may just not be ambiguous at all; according to Mattern (2005) soft power is not as soft as we would like to think. She argues that attraction – soft power per se – is constructed through representational force; a non-physical but nevertheless a coercive form of power. However, it is important to understand that other agents – nongovernmental and governmental agents – also contribute to the construction of nations' identity (Bolewski 2008). Artists, companies and sportsmen, just to name a few, are in a world where technological improvement more and more intruding on the Cultural Attaché's working field.

### **3.1.3 Éspirit de corps in diplomacy?**

Diplomacy is an old profession, where differences across national culture sometimes are perceived as having faded away. Is it then reasonable to try to depict a “way of doing” as a cause of national culture? It is true; according to Bolewski (2008) diplomats share many common traits due to similar professional education, similar social rules and similar procedures. This suggests an *esprit de corps* within the diplomatic profession. Different cultural backgrounds can however and according to him never be neglected, because erasing what Hofstede calls the “programming of the mind” is not possible.

### **3.2 Grunig's excellence theory**

The excellence theory is the most generally accepted theory dealing with communication management in public relations research. Their study was guided by two main themes, 1) why and how public relation is able to increase organizations' effectiveness and how much that is worth economically, and 2) how is the most effective public relation managed/conducted. Hence, which are the best practices and what's their value. The Excellence study showed that PR can be an effective management function that helps organizations to interact with the environment they are operating in. Based on empirical evidences, the authors argue that the theory holds true whether organizations are of private or governmental character. The environment they are part of consists of different publics who affect their organizational objectives, hence potentially affecting organization behaviour (feedback loop). Publics ultimately influence organizational strategic decision-making, thus also their success. In addition, the study emphasizes the value of PR that derives from relationships that organizations develop with publics. On the basis of their empirical findings Grunig et al. (1992; 1995; 1998) suggest that successful/valuable relations with the public can only be build if communicators adopt a symmetrical communication (two-way symmetric). Such communication model is equally important to develop internally. In addition to the symmetrical model, Grunig and Hunt (1984) originally developed three more PR models: Two-way asymmetric, Press agency/publicity and Public information. Along with time, these models have been criticized for being overly simplistic and general (Leichty and Springston 1993). Following that, Grunig et al. (2002) found reasons to redesign the original four models by going beyond the static typology and identifying four dimensions underlying the four models.

The four PR models (Grunig and Hunt 1984):

1. The press agency/publicity model explains public relations activities with the sole purpose of constructing a favourable identity. To do this, the press is used as a one-way communicative stream: a source-to-receiver communication model.
2. The public information model. Dissemination of information with little concern for a two-way communication stream.
3. A two-way asymmetrical model explains how organisations use social science theories to persuade and influence audiences.



4. The two-way symmetrical model focuses on a more balanced communication, promoting mutual understanding between organisations and audiences, by changing both entities. More normative: ethical and effective.

From typology to the culmination of a four dimensional normative framework (Grunig et al. 2002):

1. Direction dimension describes if the public relation is one-way or two-way. In other words if information is disseminated or exchanged.
2. Purpose dimension describes to what extent the public relation is collaborative.
3. Channel dimension describes how the public relation is performed, through what channel, media or interpersonal.
4. Ethic dimension describes the interests and social responsibility toward the public.

Yun (2005) findings suggest a convergence between public relation and public diplomacy, not only with respect to communication behaviour but also at the communication management level. So did Signitzer and Coombs<sup>4</sup> (1992), they argue that public relation and public diplomacy practitioners seek the same objectives - to affect public audiences (abroad or domestically) through communication programs. In other words, diplomats and public relation professionals are dealing with similar tasks (L'Etang 1996). They stress that similarly to public relations, public diplomacy too seek to build an image, exchange information and reduce miss-conceptions. This convergence is becoming increasingly evident today, in the light of the continuous technological advances. For those reasons, these two concepts are united into one conceptual framework in order to understand public diplomacy management.

Consequently, public diplomacy management is conceptualized and measured through the four dimensional framework (and the four factor-models). This PR model enables me to anchor, conceptualize and operationalize public diplomacy – the dependent variable. In order to test the validity of the excellence theory (global PR theory) (1996) Rhee (2009) replicated parts of the study in Korea, and found that the theory is a “good fit” explaining practices in Korea.

Since the study attempts to investigate whether culture is a determinant of variation in public diplomacy management across countries, the second step is to theorize the

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<sup>4</sup> Sholars more known for their work within the sphere of “Agenda Setting”.

independent variables.

### 3.3 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Societal culture is hypothetically responsible for moulding organizational culture and characteristics of management within organizations responsible for public diplomacy. *Culture* as an independent variable is operationalized and measured through Hofstede's four cultural dimensions.

Firstly, it is worthy to note the difficulties associated with the idea of capturing national cultural characteristics. As Hudson (1997) pointed out, conception of culture have become so inclusive and holistic that they mean everything and nothing at the same time. Hudson effectively captures the analytical utility of culture when it is broken down into three facets – where one of them being *culture as templates for human strategy*. Echoing this logic is Linton (1945) who stressed that individuals facing unknown situations tend to imitate cultural patterns of their own society. Inspired by Yun (2005), I apply *culture as templates for human strategy/action* in my quest to understand how national culture is linked to a country's interactions with its external environment and members of other groups.

Hofstede has made a strong case for the relationship between societal culture and management; he executed a comprehensive cross-cultural study in an attempt to understand how differences in thinking and social action between countries affect management (1980)<sup>5</sup>. Hofstede founds that organizations are cultural-bound. Following Durkheim, he understands culture as a social phenomenon and rejects any notion that suggests culture being linked to race. Hofstede (2004) explains how different institutions exist with respect to specific countries; institutions are the way societies are organised, i.e. how educational systems are designed and how the economy and politics are organised. In addition to these macro-institutions there are a myriad of other institutions, starting from family structures. Hofstede goes on, and expresses the visibility of these institutions, similarly to elements of national identity (e.g. common language and history). Between these elements of national identity and institutions he identifies and localises the *cultural* element – culture per se. He adds yet another definition of culture to the already crowded pool of definitions. He proposes the following; “*culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another.*”(p.21)

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<sup>5</sup> Hofstede's findings have been criticized for being out-dated, however, cultural dimensions supposedly change very slow, which implies that his findings, hence theory still holds (Hofstede and Usunier 1999).

Hofstede uses “programming” as a metaphor; by no means does he link human-beings to “programming” as we would tend to associate with computer terminology. Institutions have a remarkable ability to pass on mental programming from generations to generations. Culture then, includes systems of values, which are among the building blocks of culture.

As a result of his research, Hofstede was able to identify five (the fifth with Bond 1988) cultural dimensions enabling him to observe different values in different countries (based on national cultures). These different values varying across countries condition how organisations are managed. The four cultural dimensions are the following;

#### *Power distance*

The notion of power distance encompasses how much inequality societies accept. Societies where low power distance persists are associated with egalitarianism, indicating that norms are centred on democratic values and equality (flatter structure). On the opposite side, societies with a higher share of power distance are organized in a more hierarchical fashion, where a few people should be independent while most should be dependent. Hofstede adds that, *certus paribus*, there is more coercive and referent power à la French and Raven (1859) employed in high power distance society.

#### *Uncertainty avoidance*

Hofstede rightly presumes that we live in a world where we are conscious about the uncertainty of the future. Uncertainty avoidance is associated with how societies cope with uncertainty, more specifically it encompasses the degree of anxiety societies feel when dealing with unknown and/or uncertain situations. Hofstede argues that societies adapt to uncertainty in different ways, since uncertainty belongs to countries’ cultural heritage, which are transferred and reinforced through societal institutions. These values reflected in the collective programming have non-rational roots making uncertainty avoidance seem aberrant to other societies. High uncertainty avoidance societies are more inclined to avoid uncertain situations. It also reflects the importance societies attach to rules, long-term planning and steady progression according to a well-defined traditional road-map. Hofstede identifies several differences; among other things he found that high uncertainty avoidance countries tend to be less risk-taking, more suspicious towards foreigners as managers, emphasise the importance of hierarchies, prefer clear frameworks in which they are allowed to act and more resistant to change.

### *Masculinity vs Femininity*

This cultural dimension measures the importance societies place on stereotypical masculine values such as power, materialism, power and assertiveness. Women on the other hand are supposed to take a more nurturing role. Societies with high masculinity scores also tend to have wider gender gaps. Societies with lower masculinity scores do not necessarily imply less gender inequality; women are to a higher degree included in the society, but the gender roles are simply blurred. A society with lower score of masculinity defines achievement in terms of human contacts and living environment, while society with higher masculinity scores defines achievement in terms of wealth and recognition. Furthermore, interdependence, sympathy for the unfortunate and orientation toward people are societal norms in societies with low masculinity scores, while independence, sympathy for the successful achiever and orientation toward money and things are societal norms in societies with high masculinity scores.

### *Individualism vs Collectivism*

This fourth dimension of national culture describes the relationship between individuals and the collectivity, which prevails in a given society. Individualism may in some societies be seen as source of well being, while it may in other societies be associated with alienation. In the high end of this dimension, individualistic societies expect individuals to assume responsibility for themselves and close family members only, while the opposite is true for collectivistic societies, where groups are larger, members shows greater respect and loyalty toward each other and take more responsibility for each others well-being.

### *Long Term vs Short Term Orientation*

Hofstede and Bond (1988) added a fifth dimension in order to control for differences among Western and Eastern national cultures; something his previous Western questionnaires failed to reveal. The study can be seen as an attempt to eliminate ethnocentric bias. It was primarily conveyed to capture Confucian heritage: Bond called it *Confucian Work Dynamism* to begin with, until it was renamed to *Long Term vs Short Term Orientation*. This cultural dimension reflects societies' (foremost Asian) attitudes toward long-term commitments and respect for traditions (with limits) versus a short-term and historical perspective.

### 3.3.1 Culture

First of all, let me quote Soares et al. (2007:283), “Culture is a fuzzy concept raising definitional, conceptual, and operational obstacles for research on it and on its human behaviour influences.” I do not intend to elaborate on the vast and deep issues that surround culture. Instead I restrict the study to Hofstede’s framework since it constitutes a rather simple and practical operationalization of culture.

Culture according to Hofstede (2001:10) is “the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to environment”.<sup>6</sup> He proposes the most comprehensive theory explaining the relationship between societal culture and management. Rhee (1999) empirically reported on the linkage between Hofstede’s and Grunig’s theory in the Korean context. Zurovchaks’s (1997) works showed that small differences in Hofstede’s cultural dimensions have a considerable impact on decision-making within the walls of foreign ministries.

The study’s is theoretically linked to Hofstede’s definition of culture, which has gained some international acceptance and validity. The question is whether culture à la Hofstede creates variations across national public diplomacy management.

### 3.4 Theoretical sum-up

As the theoretical discussion above emphasises, assuming the convergence of PR and PD enables me to measure and operationalize public diplomacy management. Thereof PD – the dependent variable - is perceived through the prism of Grunig’s Excellence theory. The anchoring of PD management in PR theory is intuitively valid as stressed by Signitzer and Coombs (1992), besides that, the validity of the operationalization is further reinforced through dialogue with the Cultural Attaché at the Republic of Korea (ROK) embassy in Stockholm.

Since culture constitute the broadest influence on many dimensions of human behaviour, the independent variable – culture – should hypothetically determine (at least to a certain degree) *how* and *why* Korea conducts/manages its PD the way it does. Many scholars have attempted to operationalize culture (see e.g. Bond 1987; Inkeles and Levinson 1969),

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<sup>6</sup> Hofstede’s definition of culture is not so different from Gudykunst’s (1989), “culture is the social identity individuals start to develop when they become aware of belonging to a social group: national cultures as well as political, economic, social, and historical elements form a national identity.”

however, Hofstede's framework has been the most widely employed (Söndergaard 1994) and is more or less the norm.

The theoretical linkage between these dependent and independent variables is essentially and intuitively grounded in Hudson's (1997) *culture as templates for human strategy*.

Having determined the theoretical linkage between cultural consequences and PD behaviour it is time to connect the dots – how Hofstede's cultural dimensions are associated with Korean PD practises.

### **3.5 Theoretical application**

The Hofstede centre's official website provides various tools based on Hofstede's research. Among other things the Hofstede centre provides national cultural dimensions scores for a vast number of countries. Figure 2 in appendix A shows Korea's cultural dimensions in comparison to Sweden. Korea is depicted in comparison to Sweden in order to illustrate the variations existing across countries.

*Power distance (PDI):* Korea scores 60 in the power distance dimension, indicating a relatively high level of inequality and a centralized organisational structure is preferred; meaning that subordinates expect to take instruction from a benevolent autocrat. Korea is a hierarchical society where individual accept their place without further justification.

*Individualism (IDV):* With a low score of 18 Korea is considered as highly collectivistic country. Korea has on repeated occasions been referred to as the most Confucian country, which inevitably impact on individuals' relations to the group. Koreans values relationships, which manifests in form of long-term commitments towards the member-group – “everybody are responsible for everybody”. Furthermore, loyalty in a collectivistic country such as Korea is a crucial element often over-riding most other laws and regulations.

*Masculinity (MAS):* With a score of 39 Korea is considered as a feminine society, reflecting consensus-seeking managers, that members of the society values equality, solidarity and quality in their working environment. Thus, focus is on wellbeing and not on rank/status. Conflicts and negotiations are primarily resolved through compromises.

*Uncertainty avoidance (UAI):* With a score of 85 Hofstede categorize Korea as one of the most uncertainty avoiding society in the world. Thus, reflecting a society inherent of rigid codes of conducts not open for unorthodox ideas and values. This in turn implies that Korea is a country that tends to be resistant to change, which affects its ability to innovate. Overall, Koreans cherish hierarchies and rules, and put emphasis on precision, punctuality and security though risk-minimizing.

*Long Term vs Short Term Orientation (LTO):* As a country heavily affected by its Confucian cultural heritage, Korea categorize as a long-term oriented country. Members of the Korean society are to a large degree guided by Confucian values/virtues that leans against future rewards. Perseverance and thrift are future-oriented virtues that are prevalent in the Korean society. This orientation served Korea well during its development process, where the emphasis was on pragmatic and durable growth in combination with a strong consensus (Rodrik et al. 1995).

### **3.6 Framework: Public Diplomacy and Cultural dimensions**

In the spirit of Yun (2005) I will associate and connect public diplomacy behaviour (excellence dimensions) with Hofstede's five cultural dimensions. Unlike Yun, I have added Hofstede and Bond's (1988) fifth dimension, since the study focus on Korea, a Confucian-influenced country.

As a *collectivistic* society Korea presumably deals with PD with respect to interdependence, harmony, negotiation and harmony. Korea's public diplomacy should thus reflect a sense of collaboration with other international entities. However, the relationship is more complex; although members embrace a deep sense of responsibility toward societal group members, collectivistic societies do not feel the same sense of responsibility toward so-called out-group members, since they are perceived as impersonal social entities (Hwang 1987). Therefore it is probable that Korea's PD has less intention to establish good relations with other international actors - so-called out-group members. Hence, Korea's PD is more likely to focus on national self-interest. Yun's (2005) empirical results show that the collectivistic a country is the more asymmetrical PD communication.

*Hypothesis one (H1): Korea embraces a more asymmetrical and less ethical PD*

With high scores on *power distance* Korea is organized in a strictly hierarchical fashion, where members of the society do not question their place in society. With the same logic, countries with high power distance should implement hierarchical scripts dealing with PD, and inequality in regards of the out-group is perceived as inevitable. This reinforces H1. Moreover, Korea's vertical organisational structure may eliminate competition among different PD actors, creating a more coordinated PD.

*Hypothesis two (H2): Korea embraces a more coordinated and integrated PD*

Korea, as one of the most *uncertainty avoiding* countries in the world, presumably prefers traditions and status quo - unknown ground is preferably not explored, reflecting an environment where innovation and change not easily find fertile ground. Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) argues that high uncertainty countries strongly believe in their *own* truths. In this logic, Korea's PD is hypothetically not aligned with a worldview encompassing a moving-equilibrium. This reinforces H1. Moreover, uncertainty avoidance presumably hampers the evolution and development of effective and innovative PD, not properly understanding its value. This can also be linked to a hypothesis that Korea's PD lack diversity and empowerment of PD practitioners, which results from the high power distance Korea exhibits.

*Hypothesis three (H3): Korea embraces a more traditional form of PD*

At first glance, many would be inclined to think of Korea as a masculine country. Nevertheless it is, through the lens of Hofstede a *feminine* country. However, it is worth noting that Korea is not as feminine country as for example Sweden, which is made clear in figure 1. Hofstede (2001) points out the relationship between feminine countries and foreign aid. He finds that feminine countries are more inclined to assist other less developed countries. Many traits associated to feminine countries correlates with collectivistic countries; such as resolution of conflicts through negotiations. Following this logic, feminine countries should exhibit a greater sense of global responsibility. This hypothesis contradicts previously made hypothesis, and since Korea did not categorize as neither a strong masculine nor a strong Feminine country the link between PD and this cultural dimension is assumed to be weak. Besides that, Yun (2005:263) found that the masculine versus feminine dimension had a very small and insignificant coefficient with all the constructs of PD. Therefore it is left out.



As a country *highly oriented towards future rewards*, Korea is focused on long-term objectives. In the Korean society, pragmatic search for things that work is valued higher than timeless absolute truths, which is also strongly correlated with Confucianism. The fact that all public diplomacy (world-wide) is centred on more or less long-term rewards makes this linkage less explanatory (Cull 2007). Nevertheless, countries may or may not for example finance PD programs that does not generate benefits over the nearest long-term. E.g. the British Council continues to operate in Zimbabwe, Iran and Burma even though the rewards are difficult to identify. If and when diplomatic relations between these countries improve the UK will, among other things, reap the benefit of “first mover”. The same logic applies for Sweden’s diplomatic programs in Cuba and in North Korea. In accordance to Hofstede’s dimension, Korea should theoretically conduct future-oriented PD programs.

*Hypothesis four (H4): Korea embraces future-oriented PD*

## **4. Empirical discussion**

### **4.1 Background: Korea’s public diplomacy**

After having lived in Korea for one year, where I studied and completed a six month-long internship at the Swedish embassy my perception is that many people around the globe (especially in the West) do not know a lot about the divided country. In fact, many people mostly make negative associations with North Korea and some even don’t know which Korea is which. The lack of understanding of Korea have been persistent despite it’s growth miracle, being the fifteenth largest economy in world and home to some of the most famous brands – thirteen Korean companies are listed in the Fortune Global 500 list. I believe my perception of Korea’s image abroad is close to the reality; in 2008 President Lee Myung-bak announced the creation of a President Council on Nation Branding under the direct control of the President. He stressed that in order to be an advanced nation, Korea needs to improve its reputation in a groundbreaking manner. During his congratulatory speech on the Korean Independence Day August 15, 2008 he proclaimed three core values for Korea’s future; one of them was the importance of Nation Branding. The same year Korea ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 50 nations in the 2008 Anholt’s Nation Brands Index, which do not reflect its economic power. One reason may be that Korea’s foreign policy mainly has revolved around two axes – stabilizing the

Korean peninsula and enhancing economic cooperation. Because of that, public diplomacy have until very recently occupied a relatively lower priority in terms of foreign policy organizational weight (Park 2010). But the emerging consciousness about the power of PD is reflected in Korea's present governmental policies.

#### **4.1.1 Korea's abundant soft power resources**

Korea has systematically moved up the soft power ladder. It has done so quietly as J. Nye puts it. Korea is no longer strictly defined in the light of its problematic neighbour North Korea. Albeit it still needs to distinguish itself from North Korea, South Korea has a captivating story to tell. Korea has during the last five decades gone from being a country economically similar to Afghanistan to the 13<sup>th</sup> largest economy. It is the fastest country to ever have gone from receiving aid to being a donor.

Besides that, Korea is attracting a young crowd with its popular culture comprised of Kpop and Korean dramas – also known as the Korean wave. The successful Korean diaspora – particularly in the US – has also contributed to the country's increased attractiveness. Korean culture is blooming – it has gained momentum – and it shows no sign of slowing down. Obama has several times emphasised Korea's educational success, and even stressed that it should be seen as a good example.

Korea has prospered not only in economic (and democratic) terms but also in diplomatic terms. During the last decade Korea has become a member of the OECD, hosted the Olympic games in 1988, hosted the football World Cup 2002, hosted a G20 Summit in 2010, hosted the Nuclear Security Summit 2013 and the Seoul Conference on Cyberspace in 2013. Korea's struggle for power was largely influenced by the threats posed by neighbouring North Korea and by their quest for economic growth (hence, mostly hard power), but Korea has, as emphasised along the study increased their awareness and focus on acquiring soft power. Today Korea's PD is handled by the Presidential Council on Nation Branding, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and more than twenty other affiliated agencies.

## **4.2 Empirical results**

### **4.2.1 Dataset 1: Major Korean PD practitioners**

A difficulty arising when interpreting the data is the different nature organisations exhibits. Organisations conducting PD activities may have an inherent objective that holds more explanatory power than the independent cultural variables. Hence, the nature of the organisation needs to be taken into consideration. In accordance with this study, PD activities can according to Ali Fisher (2009) be viewed on a scale that ranges from “listening” to “telling”. Some organisations may just be “telling” by nature, such as the King Sejong Institute (Sejonghakdang) that deals exclusively with the promotion of the Korean language. Having that in mind, the content analysis was executed by analysing the agencies’ official webpages (e.g. objectives, missions, visions and strategies, news statements, press releases and speeches, official video streams and the type and characteristics of projects) through the hypotheses.

In a final stage, I will present and compare the data obtained through the e-interview with the Korean Cultural Attaché and the data obtained through studying the major Korean PD agencies. This triangulation will enable me to minimize eventual bias, such as response or omission bias.

### **Presidential Council on Nation Branding**

Established in 2009, the council serves as a control tower for the government’s PD activities. Its initiatives are divided in three pillars, 1) act as a pan-governmental control tower, 2) support effective nation branding projects, and 3) reinforce and expand public cooperation and participation. The vision pursued by the council – “A reliable and dignified Korea” – is to be attained through enhancing Korea’s role and global responsibility, raise awareness of Korea’s cultural values, reinforce mutual understanding between Korea and the world, and encourage active citizen participation.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea (MOFA)**

The new government of Park Geun-hye have made “*achieving a new era of hope, working to contribute to peace and co-prosperity of the international community by enhancing cooperation and building trust with countries around the world in a more creative and proactive manner*” as Korea’s foreign policy goal. “Trust diplomacy” is part of the Park government to build trust and to enhance its national brand as “a trusted fascinating Korea

...”. The new foreign policy is in line with the domestic policies – “Government 3.0” – which rests on the idea of building a two-way communication stream between citizens and the government.

In the opening speech at the 6<sup>th</sup> Korea Foundation Global Seminar in 2013, the Vice foreign Minister, addressed PD in the following way,

*”According to the classical theory of international politics, confrontation and competition among states create power and order. However, this theory cannot explain the changing dynamics of today’s world or resolve many of today’s global challenges. Instead, there is an increasing need for communication and cooperation as well as understanding and sharing among countries, which in turn raises the expectation for the role of middle powers”.*

Which clearly reflects Korea’s standpoint as a middle-power with the aim of bridging conflicts through trust and mutual understanding and taking a larger global responsibility.

Moreover, in 2013 the foreign ministry held its first workshop on PD – The scholars Group for Public Diplomacy. The theme was “Creativity is a long tradition, a culture and life to Korea”. This is certainly a shot to soften the image of Korea as a copycat. The group is composed of 16 foreign scholars working in Korea and corresponding cultural attachés (news statement MOFA 2013.10.10). The ministry and the work-shop reflect the Korean government’s willingness to consider outside opinion on its PD and in this particular case, to address the negative attention Korea’s ability to innovate have been exposed to. Thus, by inviting foreign experts the ministry looked for advice on how to conduct their PD in different countries.

Furthermore, one of the ministry’s key diplomatic tasks is literary to strengthen its national brand through active PD activities. The following can be read on MOFA’s official webpage, *“In addition, it will try to enhance its national brand as a trusted fascinating Korea through active public diplomacies.”* It is not until recently MOFA acknowledged how unfamiliar public diplomacy was in Korea – in a speech in 2010 Kim Dong-Gi, Deputy Director-General, Cultural Affairs Bureau, MOFAT, explains how Korea’s foreign policy was dominated by security and trade issues, neglecting PD.

## **Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)**

The responsibility of recruiting and training Korean career diplomats was in 2012 passed on to the newly established KNDA (legally part of MOFA). The academy searches for professors with competences in among other fields, ethics in public life and PD, which reflects Korea's foreign affair priorities. The academy conducts Partnership Program for foreign diplomats newly assigned to Korea with the expectations *"to build a friendly and co-operative relation between participants' countries and Korea."* And also according to the academy's official webpage, the KNDA stresses its ambitions of becoming a prominent think-tank in the area of diplomatic security through increased cooperation between internal and external research institutions.

## **Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism**

As Korea became more aware of PD, in 2008 the government merged the Government Information Agency and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism establishing the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Each year, the ministry hands out a special achievement award to a Korean music artist for her contribution to the "Hallyu Wave". The Hallyu Wave, also known as the Korean wave stands for the Korean popular culture gaining momentum all over the world. The event is sponsored by the National Branding Committee, the Korean Communications Commission, the Korea Culture, the Information Service and the Korea Foundation – all of them governmental agencies with focus on PD. Furthermore, in 2009 the Korean government established the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) in order to develop and promote the Korean culture industry. The public agency was created out of five previous agencies with more or less the same ambitions. In March 2012, the KOCCA began offering financial support for all Korean artists seeking to perform abroad – called overseas expansion support. To enhance coordination, the five merged organizations created a super body with the aim of supporting and promoting not only the music industry, but the whole content industry as a whole (such as animation, TV programs etc.).

## **Centre for Public Diplomacy**

The 17<sup>th</sup> of July this year, the foreign ministry hold the opening ceremony of the Centre for Public Diplomacy. The centre will, as its name suggests, support various PD projects. The centre was established reflecting the government's ambition to empower the

private sector; what they call, “Public Diplomacy in Partnership with the People”. The project has multiple objectives; the most salient objectives however, are to increase the domestic awareness of PD and to boost the civilian participation in diplomacy.

### **Korea Foundation**

The Korea Foundation - a MOFA affiliated organization – was created in 1992, as Korea emerged as a more significant PD practitioner. Since its creation the foundation has advanced a wide range of so-called “exchange programs”. Their main objective is – as part of the Park administration’s “trust diplomacy” - for Korea to be perceived as a responsible middle power that acts as a facilitator on global issues such as poverty eradication and environmental issues. The Korea Foundation’s PD rests on three dimensions, 1) intellectual exchange through people-to-people programs, 2) knowledge sharing through organizing conferences on global issues, and 3) people’s participation through the empowering of Korean citizens in PD, which is highlighted in the *message from the President* section of the webpage. Furthermore, the foundation supports the production of broadcasting and media abroad. Additional to that, the foundation publishes a rather extensive overview of its mission and vision. Their management philosophy is based on trust, performance and on an open system. The overall picture the foundation paints in this section resembles that of a corporation’s - the discourse is centred on “improving efficiency”, “expand networks” and “strengthen organization management capacity and competitiveness”.

According to their official webpage, the Korea Foundation operates a systematic channel for dialogues with major countries in the world. The dialogues – forums by countries - are conducted to foster “future-oriented, cooperative relationships via the promotion of international understanding of Korea and the formation of a human resources network, connecting opinion leaders throughout Korea and the world.” The bilateral forums gathers leaders from governmental, media, finance, academia and from cultural organizations to create and “discuss matters of common interest, build a platform for friendship and cooperation, and reach mutual understanding”. Finally, the Korea Foundation carries out Youth Exchange Programs to improve mutual understanding and to forge friendship and to strengthen future ties.

### **Korea Public Diplomacy Forum (KPDF)**

The KPDF was established in 2010 by the Korea foundation in co-operation with MOFAT with the intention to support the efforts of Korean domestic experts in their

endeavours to formulate strategies for Korea's PD. PD practitioners; experts from various fields of academia and the media are participating in this support mechanism.

### **King Sejong Institute**

The institute was created under the direction of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism with the purpose of 1) promoting the Korean language, 2) vitalizing cultural exchange based on culture reciprocity, and 3) promoting and spreading the Korean language as a representative brand. The King Sejong Institute is not very different from other nations' language-promoting agencies. Worth noting however, is the definition of its goals: the use of "representative brand" is associated with Anholt's NB. The Korean government has opened 91 new institutes around the globe since 2010, amounting to a total of 113 institutes.

### **Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)**

Korea can be proud over its economic development. No country has ever gone from being a recipient of aid to being a donor as fast as Korea. Korea surpasses any other donor country, by almost tripling its spending from 2006 to 2011. Korea attempts to undertake a leading role in global development. In December 2013, the World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim visited Korea with the purpose to open a World Bank Office. Korea's first peer review – a milestone for Korea - signed the Development Committee (DAC, OECD) was published in 2012 and reflects the advances Korea has made and the lessons and experiences it brings to the international debate and development activities. In 2012, Korea's ODA amounts to USD 1,5 billion – still a rather modest amount - but according to MOFA Korea will strive to double its ODA to USD 3 billion or 0,25 of its GNI by 2015, which is more ambitious than the US or Japan. KOICA plays an important role in terms of ODA implementation (under the assistance of MOFA and the ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF)). Korea's ODA programs are part of Korea's new role in the international community, and with new policies follows the need of adjustments. The peer review (OECD 2012) suggests a number of recommendations but simultaneously acknowledge Korea's improvement along its short journey as a donor country.

### **Seoul Metropolitan Government**

In order to improve Seoul's brand, the Seoul Metropolitan Government-planned global marketing project have employed professional help from two of Korea's most talented

and renowned directors - Park Chan-wook and Park Chan-kyong. The project aims to produce a movie – “Seoul, Our Movie” – in order to boost tourism.

Moreover, The Seoul Global Culture & Tourism Centre clearly states their objectives: Promote mutual understanding of foreign and Korean culture.

#### **4.2.2 Dataset 2: Korean Cultural Attaché**

The Cultural Attaché was requested to answer and elaborate on what type of communication he prefers and the reasons why. He answered that email is preferred as an initial step due to practical reasons. Then, telephone or face-to-face communication is considered. More interesting, the Cultural Attaché answered that, if necessary, he would suggest unofficial meetings over lunch or dinner as an effective way to foster mutual understanding and establishing close ties with diplomatic partner(s).

On the question regarding the purpose of press relations, the Cultural Attaché stressed that press relations is conducted in order to enhance/develop mutual understanding between countries.

Answering the question regarding research prior to initiating communication programs, the Cultural Attaché explained how sufficient research is executed in order to adapt the message to the receiver. The Cultural Attaché emphasized the importance of tailoring information for targeted groups; the understanding of foreign audiences was also highlighted in his answers – previous to any communication program, the embassy conducts research to understand the attitudes of audiences in order to ethically balance the interests of Korea and the foreign public. And after finishing a communication program, the embassy follow-ups and evaluates the program. The subsequent follow-up is given high priority; it is according to the Cultural Attaché conducted even though the embassy’s resources are constrained.

When requested to elaborate on information dissemination, the Cultural Attaché explained how the embassy reports back to their home government. The ROK embassy informs their government on Swedish public opinion and policies when the Korean government explores policy alternatives. Swedish policies are not seldomly regarded as advanced and desirable. In other words, information dissemination is conducted in a two-way symmetrical manner.

On different dimensions of PD, the Cultural Attaché emphasized the Korean government’s strong commitments to enhance their public diplomacy (without giving any details such as budget sizes etc.). In addition to that, he explained the cooperative approach Korea embraces and how Korea, as a middle-power nation, strives to be an active and



responsible global actor. And as he himself said, “Korea strives to be in harmony within the world order”. Furthermore, when asked to elaborate on Korea’s view on global issues such as environmental and poverty reduction issues, he referred to a press release from MOFA dated 2013.12.17 stating how the Korean organization - the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) – won observer status in the UN General Assembly, which reflects Korea’s ethical foreign policy ambition.

When asked to reflect upon public-private collaboration within PD, the Cultural Attaché reported that the ROK embassy encourages such collaboration. As an example, he mentions how the embassy collaborates with companies such as Samsung and LG in order to reap the benefits of synergy effects and to merge economic and cultural effects.

On PD aspects related to organisation and coordination, the Cultural Attaché points out the relative autonomy of the Korean embassy. The embassy is responsible for the relation between Sweden and Korea, but should follow principal guidelines from the Korean government.

#### **4.4 Empirical discussion**

This second phase attempts, as previously mentioned, to incorporate all collected data. Both datasets will be merged, analysed and enable me to elaborate on the hypotheses.

*Hypothesis one (H1): Korea embraces a more asymmetrical and less ethical PD*

When comparing the results from the two datasets, I am able to reject H1. The Park administration newly implemented “trust diplomacy” based on a two-way symmetrical communication. Several Korean PD agencies have implemented feedback mechanism in order to adjust on the basis of mutual understanding. Korea is articulating a two-way symmetrical communication between itself and foreign audiences. In line with the Park administration’s “Government 3.0”, which strives to take the Korean democracy one step further, the Korean foreign affairs are undergoing a similar transformation. Hence, President Park aims to build international relationships based on trust, which in its turn is based on effective communication through openness and concern (Mishra and Mishra 2005). Openness and concern are key values in order to foster mutual understanding, which are reflected in virtually all PD agencies. When the Korean Cultural Attaché was asked to speak freely, he stressed the openness characterizing the Korean PD. And Korea is walking the talk; it has

received criticism from among others Anholt, for being too open with its PD/national branding strategies.

When it comes to Korea's ethical PD, Korea is hypothetically inclined to show less responsibility toward out-groups. This is not case; Korea has taken big steps toward establishing itself as a middle power. Korea is building an image of a responsible and proactive state, carefully crafted through real actions and policies. Korea's foreign aid programs have attained new highs and are forecasted to increase. In short, Korea interprets the two-way symmetrical communication as a win-win approach. Additionally, in late September 2013 the foreign minister of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia reached an understanding to form a new informal negotiating network of "middle powers" – the MIKTA, initiated by Korea. The main objective is for the member-countries to increase their agenda-setting role. It must be added that scholars hold certain scepticism toward the two-way symmetrical communication model, since PD is designed in order to accumulate soft power. And if soft power is constructed through representational force as argued by Mattern (2005), than PD is a coercive form of power, and therefore there cannot be a strictly two-way symmetrical model.

Finally, the 7<sup>th</sup> Summit between the EU and ROK that took place in November 2013 leaders agreed to establish the EU-ROK Public Diplomacy Forum to compare policy direction and experiences, which also support Korea's mutual understanding (win-win) approach to PD.

*Hypothesis two (H2): Korea embraces a more coordinated and integrated PD*

After having analysed and compared the results it is safe to say that Korea's overall PD strategy lacks coordination and integration and thus, rejecting H2.

Korea has made extensive efforts to enhance their public diplomacy. A myriad of governmental agencies has been merged and created during the last decade, where the Presidential Council on Nation Branding was designated as the coordinating body. However, it has faced criticism with respect to its ability to coordinate Korea's PD. The PD agencies have many overlapping activities, contributing to rivalry. This lack of (legislative) coordination is manifested through the unsettlement of three drafted laws on promoting Korean culture abroad in the ROK National Assembly (Kim T. 2012).

Moreover, when comparing the different PD agencies' visions a certain lack of coordination is apparent. Korea has until today conducted a more or less case-by-case PD

without a clear *grand vision* shared by all agencies and coordinated by a control tower-agency. Most of the various PD practitioners has acted upon their own without a mechanism that enables them to share ideas, experiences etc. However, as individual agents (or affiliated), they work in terms of coordination and integration. The Korea Foundation and MOFA for example, are coordinating their policies, with MOFA as the controlling body. The same applies within the PD activities conducted by Korean embassies and within the embassies' organization structures. In that sense, when the sample units are limited to individual actors/units, PD is carried out in a coordinated manner.

What may be the causes for this lack of overall coordination? I am willing to believe that the lack of an overall and national coordination is intended. The reasons may lie in their historical experiences and may be defined as part of the Korean culture (linked to LTO). The Korean economic miracle was propelled and engineered by the government, who based their industrial policies on a pragmatic approach. This trial-and-error approach helped the Korean government to identify sound and effective policies. In short, it helped Korea discover what worked best. The Korean government may have deliberately adopted the same approach to PD. PD in Korea is as mentioned a very new concept, where distinguishing good versus bad PD practices is not yet possible. At the same time, it is possible to observe a dimension where the PD agencies are competing amongst each other. E.g. the Korea Foundation states the following as one of its four strategic objectives, "To strengthen organizational competitiveness". Ultimately, Korea will choose its winner and the most efficient and productive organisation will take the coordinating role.

### *Hypothesis three (H3): Korea embraces a more traditional form of PD*

The overall picture does not suggest that Korea conducts a more traditional PD, thus, rejecting H3. As mentioned, Korea has dramatically increased its PD awareness during the last decade and is in the process of establishing and incorporating PD. Their PD can be categorized as very dispersed; i.e. Korea is not putting all its eggs in one basket. Thus, it is difficult to say whether Korea has adopted a PD or a NB approach, it looks more like if Korea is on a voyage of discovery.

The KNDA is revitalized in order to better suit the new challenges facing PD, the Korean citizens are empowered and seen as a key player for achieving an effective PD, the Korea Foundation is conducting PD Conferences in a multidisciplinary way à la Gilboa and celebrities are employed as Korean ambassadors. Additionally, all the Korean PD

practitioners named in the study are active on social media such as Facebook and Twitter (but in a more centralized and coordinated way). In short, Korea is breaking every new ground there is.

The lack of PD prior to the presidency of Lee Myung-bak is better explained by Korea's context – the two axes in Korea's foreign policy (Security and economic cooperation) - than by cultural dimensions.

*Hypothesis four (H4): Korea embraces future-oriented PD*

After having considered the difficulties in identifying future-oriented PD that by nature is focused on the long run, I fail to reject H4. Korea is in the forefront; decision-makers have the future in focus and strive to prepare the country as best they can. According to Hofstede (2001), high scores of LTO were strongly correlated with the economic growth in East Asia.

Korea is dynamic, signing a long list of free trade agreements almost forcing themselves to adapt for the impacts on the economic structure, at the same time as it creates long lasting bonds between countries (e.g. through knowledge, technology and cultural spill-over). In addition to that, Korea has stepped up its educational exchange programs, incoming students has increased over 17-fold during the period 2000-2011 (OECD 2013/05). Korea is ranked number three in the world in terms of number of students studying abroad.

Educational exchange is through the PD-lens an effective way to foster mutual understanding and to strengthen present as well as future ties between countries. As the Korean government is promoting “public diplomacy in partnership with the people”, Korean students become a great source of representational power. During the 7<sup>th</sup> Summit between EU and ROK in late 2013, leaders concluded on the Korea-EU Joint Declaration on Higher Education Cooperation.

## **5. Conclusions**

The study has build on the most recent and cutting edge research on public diplomacy. The immense attention PD has received internationally over a short period of time requires much more research. In connection with PD spreading far beyond the Western borders the necessity to focus on other nations becomes increasingly relevant. Previous

research has uncovered the vast knowledge gap that exists within PD research and pointed out a constructive direction for future research (Gilboa 2008; Yun 2005; Bolewski 2010).

The study investigated cultural dimensions as determinants for PD management. The empirical results show that cultural dimensions are not satisfactory determinants in explaining PD practices. I am afraid that this strictly cultural approach suffers from omitted variable bias. One important (and potential) causal factor that is left out is countries'/Korea's "globalization drive".

Globalization, according to Samuel S. Kim<sup>7</sup> (2000), is "a series of complex, independent yet interrelated processes of stretching, intensifying and accelerating worldwide inter-connectedness in all aspects of human relations and transactions such that events, decisions and activities in one part of the world have immediate consequences for individuals, groups and states in other parts of the world." S. Kim goes on and articulated the importance of globalization for Korea as an export-driven economy and observes the correlation between Korea's openness and transparency, and its degree of global competitiveness. In short, from Korea's standpoint it is more or less globalize or perish. In this logic, Korea's PD management may well be driven by its globalization drive, as has been observed in other studies such as Hiba Khodr (2012).

Another possible explanation may lie in relatively stronger causal effect in some/a cultural dimension(s). I.e. the impact of Korea's uncertainty avoidance on PD may be a decreasing function of long-term orientation, which is closely related to Korea's strong Confucian cultural heritage.

The point is that, if adding a historical lens and other contextual dimensions to this culture approach I am tempted to believe that other driving factors will emerge more significant. Korea's export-led economy may be one explanatory factor to why Korea seems to have adopted such a pragmatic trial-and-error approach to PD where they have diversified their activities in all directions making the distinction between a PD or a NB approach practically impossible to make.

Despite its limits, the study has shown that there is relevance in adopting a cultural approach in order to understand variations in PD across nations and cultures. Future research should in addition to the cultural lens include other variables linked to for example globalization, implying that there are several contextual factors to be controlled for. In other words, there are plenty of theoretical adjustments to be done.

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**The Murrow Center quote comes from the “what is Public Diplomacy?” page <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow/public-diplomacy.html>.**



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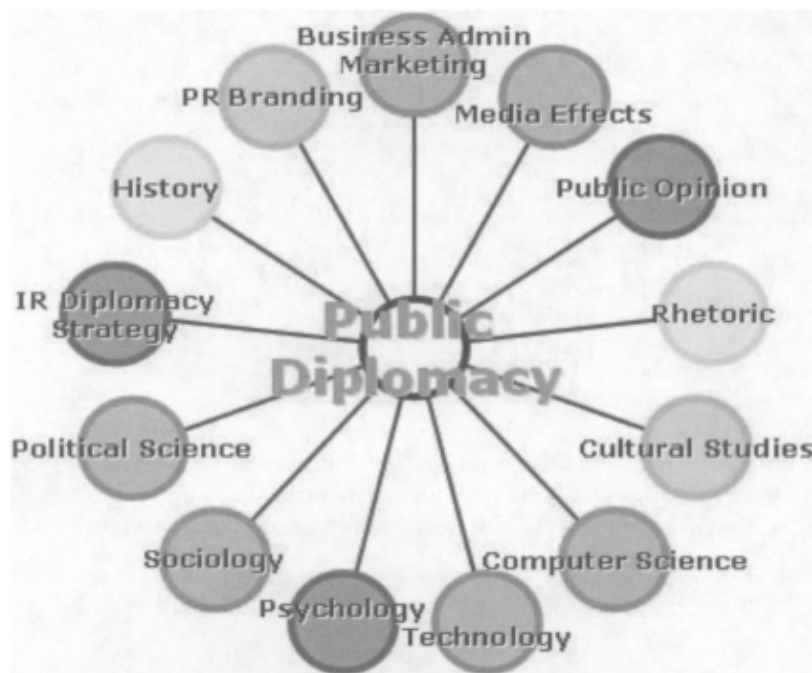
The Hofstede Centre

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## Appendix A

Figure 1

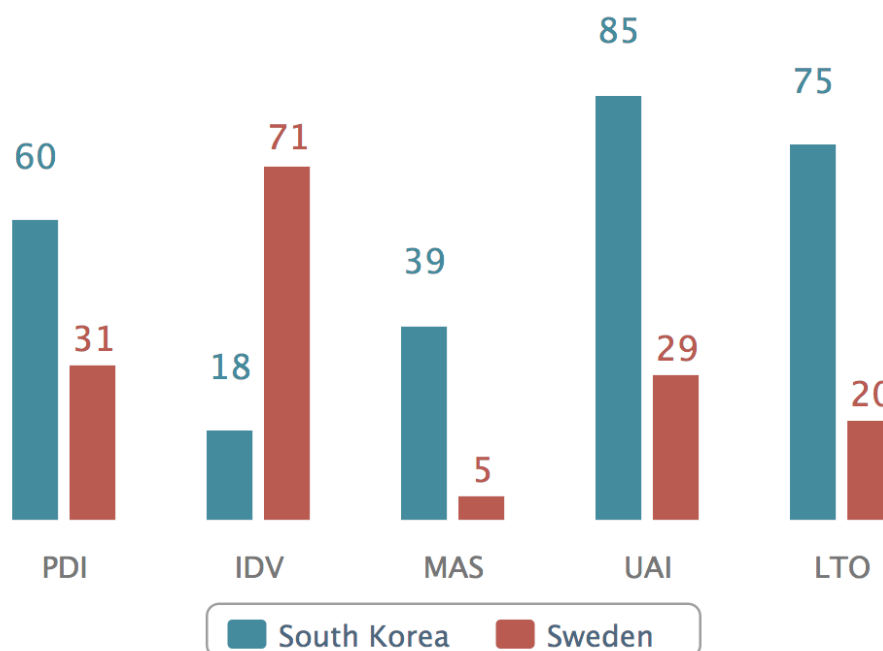
### MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



NOTE: PR = public relations; IR = international relations.

Source: Gilboa (2008)

Figure 2 - Korea's cultural dimensions in comparison to Sweden's



SOURCE: The Hofstede Centre

## **Appendix B**

e-interview : Questionnaire

### **PART I (Communication)**

**1. How and to what degree is information disseminated? (Please elaborate)**

- a. By newsletters, news release, position statements etc.?
- b. Do you get in contact with journalists?
- c. If yes, how – via telephone or face-to-face contact?
- d. How important is the dissemination of information in relation to other activities?

**2. What way of communicating is preferred and why? (Examples below)**

- a. Face-to-face contact? (Personal meeting)
- b. Email?
- c. Telephone?
- d. Unofficial meetings? (Such as playing golf or lunch)

**3. Why are press relations pursued, what's their purpose? (Please elaborate)**

- a. In order to resolve possible misunderstandings between the two countries?
- b. In order to enhance/develop mutual understanding between the two countries?
- c. Some press relations are still in place, only because they have been so for a long period of time!(!?)

**4. Before initiating any kind of communication, is research done? (Please elaborate)**

- a. In order to capture the attitudes of journalists?
- b. In order to tailor the information to specific audiences?
- c. Do you track the media for public sentiment?
- d. More generally, how does the embassy accumulate understanding about the public opinion?

**5. How are communication programs initiated? (Please elaborate)**

- a. Do you carry out research/surveys prior to initiation in order to capture the attitudes of the targeted audience?
- b. If no, does this depend on time-constraints or other things?
- c. Do you perform research after ending communication programs?
- d. If no, does this depend on time-constraints or other things?

**6. What kind of information is disseminated? (Please elaborate)**

- a. If true information is handed out to journalists, is unfavourable information voluntarily handed out too?
- b. To what degree do you try to make journalists/Swedish publics favour your government's policies?
- c. And to what degree do you inform your government about Swedish public opinion in order for your government to change/adapt their policies?
- d. What's your view on press relations (i.e. when resolving misunderstandings) – do you consider it a zero sum game where there are winners and losers?

**7. Do you disclose the purpose with communication programs? (Please elaborate)**

Do you develop sub-goals and sub-objectives?

**8. What is ROK's overall vision on how to enable its Foreign policy objectives?** (Please elaborate)

Do you believe that ROK's national interests can be achieved only when taking other nation's interest in consideration?

**What is your embassy's view on global humanitarian issues, environmental issues, global development issues etc.?** (Please elaborate)

To what degree are they integrated in the embassy's overall strategy/foreign policy?

**To what degree is "public diplomacy" supported by your government?** (Please elaborate)

- a. Is public diplomacy prioritized? (e.g. in terms of budget)
- b. Does your government allocate resources in order to train public diplomacy practitioners?
- c. How "established" is public diplomacy in your embassy? E.g. does the Ambassador support public diplomacy?

**8. What is your embassy's view on global humanitarian issues, environmental issues, global development issues etc. ?** (Please elaborate)

**9. Does the embassy carry out joint projects with Korean companies?** (Please elaborate)

- a. or think tanks?
- b. Trade associations?
- c. NGOs?
- d. If such joint projects are carried out, how are they planned? Joint planning? Joint financing?

## **PART II (organisation)**

**1. How is work coordinated at your embassy?** (Please elaborate)

- a. Are different events, parties, exhibitions, seminars etc. predetermined? Are they determined at a central level, in order to enable better coordination? (Please elaborate)
- b. Can such events be conducted on spontaneous basis? In other words, is there room for "dynamic" programs?
- c. More generally, how are different activities linked to public diplomacy carried out? How are they identified? Who decides upon which activities to be carried out?
- d. How much autonomy does ROK's embassies' have?
- e. Are there formal guidelines?